THE MINISTER'S TASK FORCE ON LITTER ABATEMENT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE HONOURABLE DONALD P. McINNES
Minister of the Environment

October 1988

Nova Scotia

89-01291/

THE MINISTER'S TASK FORCE ON LITTER ABATEMENT

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October 28, 1988

The Honourable Donald P. McInnes
Minister
Department of the Environment
P.O. Box 2107
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Report and Recommendations

Dear Mr. McInnes:

Littering is nothing new. If it weren't for the careless attitudes of our ancestors, archaeologists would not be able to provide us with fascinating insight into the daily lifestyles of past civilizations.

Today, however, littering has changed dramatically. It now reflects modern society's dependency on a "throw-away" mentality. The factors that have led to this situation are complex, but few people will disagree that the current glut of multi-material packaging and single use products have created enormous disposal problems. Even more worrying are the implications this represents to the environment and the damaging effects it has had on our beautiful province.

Following our appointments last April, the members of the Task Force have had the opportunity to talk with many concerned Nova Scotians. We were tremendously impressed with their presentations and their constructive ideas. Most of us started out with certain preconceived ideas about litter prevention and recycling. As submissions were received, discussions were held, and several on-site locations were visited, we became very excited about the calibre of the information we were receiving and many of the assumptions we had were either enhanced or changed dramatically. This knowledge and the insight we have gained from our contact with many people in this Province resulted in the attached recommendations.

I trust I speak for all members of the Task Force when I say that our involvement in this very important undertaking has been a real privilege and has had a significant impact on our personal lives. When we began our task, only one

member was a dedicated recycler. Now a number of us share her conviction.

Having had the opportunity to review a balance of approaches to litter prevention and recycling, we feel we are able to offer you objective, realistic and workable suggestions. Nova Scotia is a beautiful province whose visual environment has become threatened by careless and accidental littering. We believe that through positively reinforcing cleanliness and conserver habits, this unpleasant trend can be altered. We believe the establishment of the Task Force demonstrates the commitment of the Province to achieving a litter free environment and developing a viable recycling industry. By your government's adoption of these recommendations we feel you will be reinforcing the efforts of Nova Scotians who wish to maintain, enhance and enjoy an aesthetically pleasing province.

On behalf of the following members of the Task Force on Litter Abatement:

Charles Baxter
Donald Blenkhorne
Sylvester Le Blanc
Barrie MacFarlane
Rod McLeod
Brian Scott
Vera B. Stone
Maureen Woodlock

Yours very truly,

Dorothy Grant

Dorothy Grant
Chairman

DG/df

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minister's Task Force on Litter Abatement was announced in the Legislature on April 6, 1988 by the Minister of the Environment. The Task Force was established to provide the Minister with recommendations on the most effective means of achieving and maintaining a litter free Nova Scotia.

As part of its mandate, the Task Force was requested to examine existing litter legislation including the Beverage Containers Act and the role of recycling in the Province.

The Task Force prepared a Discussion/Issues Paper which was widely distributed. Subsequently, the Task Force held public meetings in ten locations in the Province where it heard sixty-eight oral presentations and numerous comments from audience participants. In addition, fifty-eight written submissions were received. The oral and written submissions were made by a wide array of interested parties including individuals, businesses, industry associations, academics, governments and environmental groups.

The submissions outlined a number of concerns on litter and recycling and indicated that there is a strong interest in Nova Scotia for having an aesthetically pleasing Province. With the implementation of the following recommendations, the Task Force feels that these concerns of Nova Scotians will be addressed and will result in a litter free environment and the development of a strong recycling industry.

LITTER

Legislation and Enforcement

The Minister of Transportation and Communications should:

1. with the support of the provincial Solicitor General ensure that the litter and refuse provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act and the Public Highways Act are enforced.

2. increase the minimum fine for littering under the Motor Vehicle Act and the Public Highways Act from $50.00 to $250.00.

3. ensure that an increased number of "no littering" signs with the new fines are posted throughout the Province.

4. amend the relevant penalty provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act (Section 264) and the Public Highways Act (Section 42) to require convicted litterers to undertake litter clean-up or environmental enhancement as part of their penalty.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs should:

5. with the support of the Minister of the Environment encourage the standardization and enforcement of municipal litter by-laws in all municipalities in Nova Scotia.

Illegal Dumping

The Minister of the Environment should:

6. encourage Municipalities to provide readily accessible solid waste collection depots for cottagers and for residents

who are not provided with regular garbage pick-up.

7. encourage Municipalities and solid waste disposal site operators to extend and advertise their hours of operation.

8. encourage Municipalities to provide adequate pick-up and disposal services for large waste items.

Clean-Up Programmes

The Minister of the Environment should:

9. establish ongoing litter clean-up programmes.

10. encourage municipalities to undertake regular clean-up programmes throughout their jurisdictions.

11. encourage volunteer groups to undertake litter clean-up programmes.

12. encourage industry to support voluntary clean-up programmes.

Litter Receptacles

The Minister of the Environment should:

13. encourage municipal authorities to increase the number of litter receptacles in rural and urban communities.

14. require stringent waste disposal practices at construction sites, including the use of adequate garbage receptacles.

15. with the appropriate authorities require organizers of public and private events to have available and maintain an adequate number of litter receptacles.

16. require all commercial and service operators whose products/services result in litter being accumulated, (e.g. fast food outlets, appropriate retail outlets, Canada Post delivery boxes, bus stops, etc.) to have and maintain adequate litter receptacles.

17. require all service stations to have available and maintain litter receptacles.

18. promote the use of vehicle litter bags.

19. develop guidelines for the design and number of litter receptacles required for specific locations and events.

The Minister of Transportation and Communications should:

20. establish, service and maintain rest stops with litter receptacles along public highways.

Marine Litter

The Minister of the Environment should:

21. encourage the Federal Government to resolve the issue of marine generated litter.

National Standards

The Minister of the Environment should:

22. encourage the Federal Government to establish national packaging standards aimed at reducing litter and waste.

Awards Programme

The Minister of the Environment should:

23. maintain the existing Environmental Awards Programme with awards for private and industry litter prevention and clean-up programmes.

RECYCLING

Industry Promotion and Assistance

The Government of Nova Scotia should:

24. promote recycling as an important and viable industry. Reycling should be recognized as a bona fide manufacturing operation thus making the industry eligible for existing incentive programmes for grants, low interest loans, etc., for building construction, equipment, etc., that are administered by various government departments and agencies such as the Departments of Small Business Development and Industry, Trade and Technology.

25. encourage the Federal Government to recognize the recycling industry for similar federal business assistance programmes.

The Minister of the Environment should:

26. make information available on the costs of establishing and operating a recycling business, on market information and should develop markets for recyclables.

Provincial Initiatives

The Minister of the Environment should:

27. ensure that all Provincial Departments and Agencies implement policies to recycle office products and other waste material.

28. ensure that the Government of Nova Scotia adopts a procurement policy for purchasing products made from recycled materials.

29. encourage industry, municipal governments, institutions, etc., to implement policies to recycle waste materials and for the purchase of products made from recycled materials.

Provincial Clean-Up Programmes

The Minister of the Environment should:

30. ensure that all Government clean-up programmes include the separation of recyclable materials for recycling. Among other programmes, these should include the annual Department of Transportation and Communication roadside clean-up and any clean-ups undertaken by the Departments of Environment, Lands and Forests, Tourism, etc.

Waste Separation

The Minister of the Environment should:

31. establish cost-sharing arrangements with the municipalities to encourage recycling through the implementation of waste separation programmes.

32. develop guidelines for these waste separation programmes. These guidelines should be developed for various options including curbside separation, transfer sites for separating recyclables from waste, rural and urban variations, public and private collection and disposal systems, etc.

33. undertake studies to determine the social and economic feasibility of household and other solid waste separation schemes including a study of the type and amount of recyclable materials in solid waste from all sources in Nova Scotia.

34. develop recycling requirements for municipalities to be eligible for participation in cost-sharing arrangements. These requirements should include landfill programming, increased tipping fees, reverse tipping fees, etc.

35. implement mandatory waste separation programmes if the programmes developed under cost sharing arrangements with the municipalities are not successful after two years. This should include domestic, commercial and industrial source separation.

LEGISLATION

Beverage Containers Act

The Government of Nova Scotia should:

36. under the direction of the Minister of the Environment repeal the Beverage Containers Act.

Litter Control and Recycling Act

The Government of Nova Scotia should:

37. under the direction of the Minister of the Environment formulate and proclaim a Nova Scotia Litter Control and

Recycling Act. The purpose of the Act will be to reduce litter and promote recycling in the Province.

The Provisions of the Act should:

38. include the authority for the Minister of the Environment or the Governor in Council to:

a) set and impose a financial assessment on the manufacturers, distributors and retailers of "litter materials" to fund litter control and recycling programmes. Implementation of the assessment should occur within two years at which time the level of the assessment should be based on the degradability and/or amount of material being recycled or recyclable. As a company achieves or surpasses the goals established by the Minister of the Environment, the Company's assessment shall be decreased accordingly,

b) establish recycling and degradability goals for materials found in the litter and solid waste streams,

c) define "littered materials", "packaging", "environmental acceptability", "degradability" and "recyclability",

d) determine what items are classified as "littered material",

e) approve packaging for use in Nova Scotia based on its environmental acceptability and specify the manner in which it may be used,

f) enforce the distribution, advertisement, exhibition and sale of products in approved packaging only,

g) regulate the shape, weight, volume, fabrication, materials and labelling of packaging with respect to its environmental acceptability,

h) prescibe the manner in which packaging can be disposed of including the authority to require manufacturers, distributors and retailers to develop appropriate collection systems for its proper disposal,

i) prescribe deposits on packaging and maintain and enforce existing deposits on packaging,

j) establish minimum deposits on packaging,

k) require retailers to accept for full cash refund packaging of the type and size sold by him which carries a deposit,

l) specify package labelling for refundable packaging,

m) include alcoholic beverage packaging under this Act,

n) exempt certain packaging under this Act,

o) permit the use of existing packaging for one year following the proclamation of the Act, and

p) enforce the provisions of the Act including the establishment of appropriate fines for violations.

The Minister of the Environment should:

39. undertake studies to determine the composition and distribution of litter in Nova Scotia and to set standards for material degradability and recyclability in order to implement the provisions of the Litter Control and Recycling Act.

EDUCATION

Public

The Minister of the Environment should:

40. promote the development of a provincial public education and awareness campaign to address the litter problem and the benefits of recycling in Nova Scotia. This programme should be funded by the Provincial Government, industry and private donations. The Provincial Government should collect a specified voluntary assessment from those manufacturing, wholesale and retail businesses whose packaging contributes to the litter stream. The programme should be coordinated and implemented by a private non-profit organization with the mandate to undertake this type of programme.

41. develop a programme to gather and disseminate litter prevention and recycling information to the public, recyclers, municipalities, institutions and industry. Among other subjects, this should include information on:

a) the social, economic and environmental benefits of recycling,

b) litter and recycling terminology,

c) behavioural patterns that lead to littering,

d) the social and economic costs of litter clean-up, and

e) the environmental acceptability of different types of packaging.

Institutional

The Minister of Education should:

42. develop appropriate educational materials on litter and recycling for incorporation in the school curricula for all grades province wide.

Task Force Report

The Minister of the Environment should:

43. release the Task Force Report to all interested parties as the first step in the public education process.